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1951

**FARM EMPLOYMENT
IN VIRGINIA
1951**



Annual

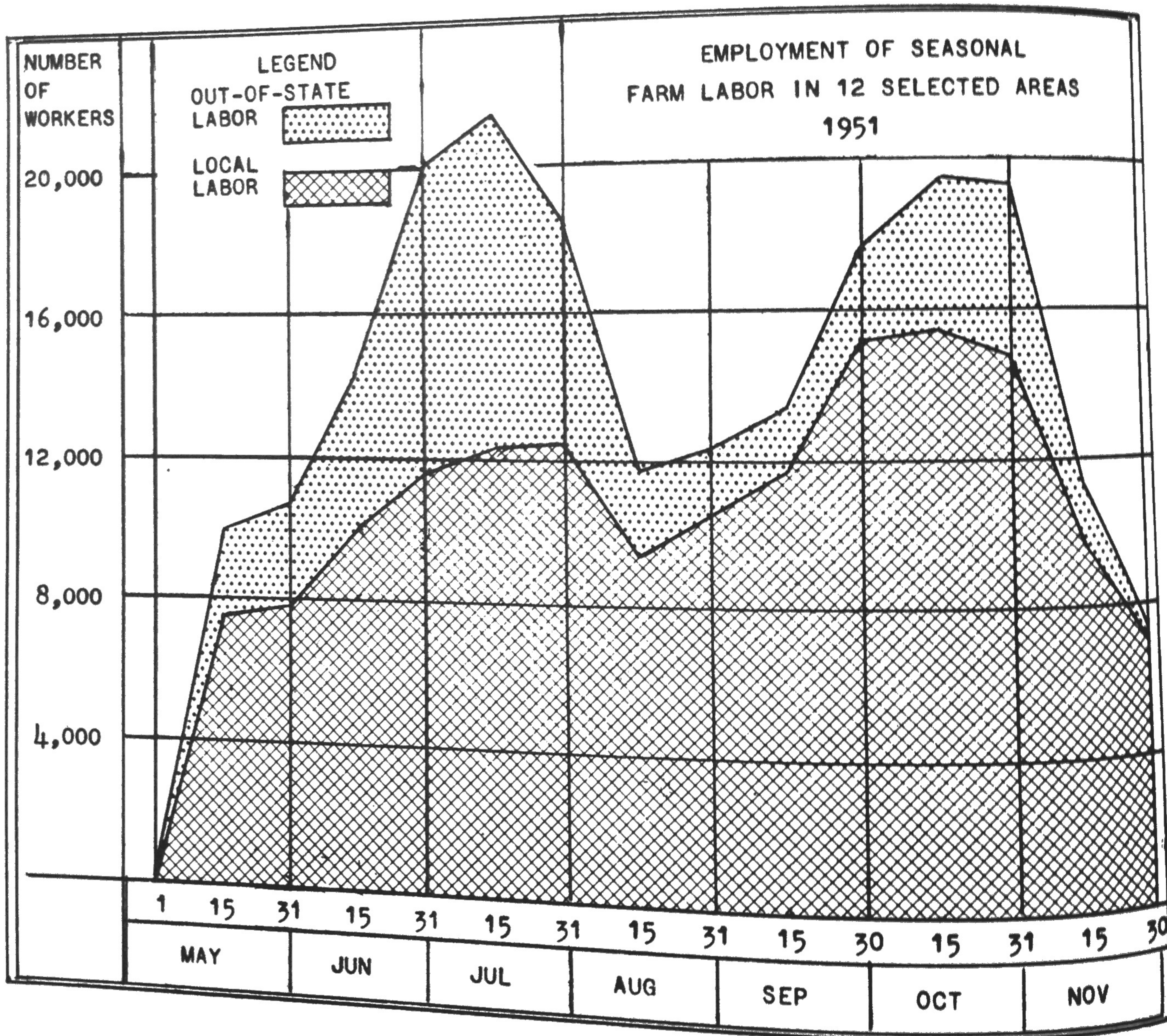
Post-season Report

VIRGINIA STATE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE
Unemployment Compensation Commission

tory work
was also at a high level
employed.

Requirements for workers remained high throughout October. The peak labor needs in the Shenandoah Valley occurred during the month when around 4,500 local and 1,000 out-of-area workers were required in the apple harvest. Around 3,000 additional laborers were used in the process plants. A late fall peak on the Eastern Shore utilized some 10,900 local workers and 2,700 out-of-area laborers. The demand for labor was suddenly increased by a wind storm in the Norfolk-Portsmouth area which blew matured corn to the ground. Unanticipated labor demands also developed in several fruit growing areas.

Labor demands continued into November with workers required in both fruit and vegetable crops. Requirements, however, dropped off with the approach of cold weather and frost. The peanut plants around Suffolk required approximately 300 male migrants to supplement local workers engaged unloading trucks and working in warehouses.



this year than in previous years. Between the peach and apple harvest workers were transferred to Maryland, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. Crews also were transferred from the vegetable sections of the Tidewater and Eastern Shore to southern states as needed. A considerable movement was involved in the recruitment for cotton picking in North Carolina.

The quality of migratory labor employed in Virginia in 1951 was not up to previous standards. Workers were older and more women were in each crew. The majority of the crews contained fewer "stags" and more family groups. All crews used in the state were Negro. A few migrant workers are remaining in Virginia through the winter months.

OTHER SOURCES

The total of 286 off-shore workers were used in Virginia during 1951. Eastern Shore farmers employed 92 Puerto Ricans and five Jamacians. Fruit growers in the Staunton and Flint Hill areas used 25 and 35 Puerto Ricans, respectively, in apple harvesting. Winchester orchardists again employed 264 Bahamians, also for harvesting apples.

MECHANIZATION

The trend toward greater use of mechanical equipment on Virginia farms, a movement that has been underway for a quarter century, continued uninterrupted last year. The pace of this movement may have quickened too, since it is evident that most types of farms and orchards are now involved in the trend. A good example is supplied in the increased use of tractors; reliable surveys find that the number of tractors has expanded from about 23,400 to approximately 48,350 within the past five years.

The farms devoted to dairying undoubtedly have outstripped others in this race for maximum use of mechanical equipment. Dairy farms, with possible exception of some smaller operations, are now approaching the optimum for the present at least. Those devoted to raising livestock for meat also are well along in the use of equipment as a means of reducing manpower requirements.

Milking equipment was being used last year in practically all established dairy farms in the state. Two to three men operating these machines perform the work which formerly required many milking hands. The ensilage harvester, introduced only a few years ago, also was being used extensively. This machine cuts, chops and loads corn in a single operation, eliminating lifting and handling of heavy corn bundles. Several men operating this equipment take the place of large silo-filling crews. Manure spreading and other fertilizing tasks now are largely performed by machinery with only one or two men involved. Hay raking and baling equipment has cut hay harvesting labor requirements drastically.

Fruit growers have mechanized operations with exception of harvesting. Tree pruning rigs are used in practically all orchards. Runways on either side of trucks allow six to eight men to work without use of individual ladders, and air-operated pruners have replaced manually-operated shears. This equipment cuts labor requirements more than 50 per

Puerto Rican and Foreign Labor

More Puerto Rican and foreign labor was employed in Virginia in 1951 than in any year since World War II. Puerto Ricans brought into Florida under contract were recruited by migratory crew leaders and brought to Virginia. One group of 92 was used on the Eastern Shore and two other groups of 25 and 17 were employed in the apple section. One Northampton County grower, who operated a hot-frame method of producing a variety of vegetables, requested five experienced Jamaicans to act as supervisors. The Employment Service located the Jamaicans while employed in Florida. A request was made by the Frederick County Fruit Grower's Association for 270 Bahamian workers. The growers had used these workers for several years and found their work to be satisfactory. The Farm Placement Service was able to locate the workers employed in New York and a representative interviewed and selected 264 workers, but later 57 of those selected were replaced by substitutes. A work contract was made with each Bahamian employed in Virginia.

The first group of 87 Puerto Ricans arrived on the Eastern Shore during the first part of May. During July five more arrived to bring the total to 92 employed in that section. In September, the two groups of 25 and 17 arrived in the Staunton and Flint Hill areas from Utica, N. Y. The Puerto Ricans used on the Eastern Shore returned to Florida in October while those recruited for the apple harvest remained until November before returning to Florida. The majority of the Puerto Ricans were men of small stature, and therefore, were not at their best doing the heavy work connected with fruit harvesting. In the vegetable crops these workers proved equal or superior to other crews. They were methodical but slow. Eastern Shore growers praised them for an excellent job in harvesting potatoes.

The five Jamaicans arrived on the Eastern Shore early in September, remaining until November when they returned to Florida. They proved to be excellent workers. Growers were well pleased and indicated a request would be made to have them returned next year.

The first group of 74 Bahamians arrived September 23, another group of 116 on October 5, and the remaining 74 later in two groups -- 31 around October 9 and the other 43 about October 16. The Bahamians completed their commitments and left Winchester November 15 and 16. A group of 41 was returned to the islands, the remaining 223 went south to fill commitments in Florida. These workers were housed in oil and coal-heated cinderblock buildings. They were fed by the association in a common mess. No problems were encountered since the Camp Manager was familiar with their diet preferences and favored them with foods to which they were accustomed.

There was considerable absenteeism among the Bahamians. Minor ailments such as colds and sore muscles and personal reasons such as laundry were the usual excuses. The morale of the workers was higher than in former years, which can be attributed to better selection of workers. The growers were well pleased with their work and are expected to request at least as many Bahamians as were employed in 1951.

SEASONAL FARM EMPLOYMENT TRENDS IN MAJOR AREAS

Area and Month	Principal Crops	Agriculture			Food Processing	
		Total	Local	Out-of-Area		
<u>Exmore</u> -	May	Strawberries				
	June	Cabbage, snapbeans, white potatoes, etc.	5,300	3,500	1,800	750
	July	Snapbeans, potatoes, sweet corn, onions, tomatoes, etc.	18,600	10,700	7,900	1,300
	Aug.	Sweet potatoes, limas & snapbeans, etc.	20,400	11,700	8,700	1,600
	Sept.	Snapbeans, sweet potatoes, peppers, etc.	8,100	6,000	2,100	1,700
	Oct.	General vegetables	9,500	8,500	1,000	1,600
			13,600	10,900	2,700	1,400
<u>Norfolk- Portsmouth</u>	May	Strawberries	4,700	4,450	250	1,000
	June	Potatoes, snapbeans, etc.	1,700	1,200	500	350
	July	Potatoes	900	450	450	350
<u>West Point</u> -	July	Tomatoes, snapbeans	600	600	0	450
	Aug.	Tomatoes, snapbeans	600	600	0	450
	Sept.	General vegetables	670	600	70	450
<u>Warsaw</u> -	July	Tomatoes	400	355	45	2,000
	Aug.	Tomatoes	500	455	45	2,200
<u>Char'ville</u> -	Aug.	Peaches	2,200	1,000	1,200	75
	Sept.	Apples	750	350	400	250
	Oct.	Apples	750	350	400	250
<u>Lynchburg</u> -	Aug.	Tomatoes, peaches	200	200	0	500
	Sept.	Tomatoes, apples	630	600	30	400
	Oct.	Apples	400	370	30	200
<u>Roanoke</u> -	Aug.	Peaches	350	300	50	0
	Sept.	Apples	300	175	125	25
	Oct.	Apples	340	125	215	60
<u>Staunton</u> -	Sept.	Apples	480	310	170	70
	Oct.	Apples	750	550	200	100
<u>Harr'burg</u> -	Aug.	Snapbeans, peaches	600	600	0	400
	Sept.	Vegetables, apples	1,280	1,280	0	450
	Oct.	Apples	1,100	1,100	0	250
<u>Front Royal</u> -	Sept.	Apples	670	510	160	30
	Oct.	Apples	970	800	170	450
<u>Winchester</u> -	Aug.	Peaches	630	500	130	560
	Sept.	Apples	1,830	1,470	360	1,700
	Oct.	Apples	1,830	1,300	530	2,000